

Bob

The Editorial Whee

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"We Be EBeedy-Beedy-Beedy...What's up, Buck?"

EB Launches Quartet of New Products

Dodorant cakes are back in the men's urinals. Both third-floor washrooms are sporting new toilet-paper dispensers. Just what's happening in Editorial these days anyway?

According to Joe Esposito, the surprise improvements, modest though they may be, symbolize the upturn in Britannica's fortunes that we all can expect from four novel products heading for the marketplace in the near future. Moreover, says Joe, washrooms have an intimate connection with one of the new EB offerings.

The most traditional of the new products is Cliff's Notes Britannica, a two-booklet (Macro-Micro) set targeted at the subclass of pseudointellectual who wants to be able to claim to have read through the entire EB but who lacks the ambition to do so. All the entries of the main set are included, although highly summarized. For example, the Cliff's Notes Micro entry for "Henry VIII" reads "king," while that for "Jupiter" reads "god and planet." Cliff's Notes Macro articles are somewhat longer, reflecting the full-size Macro's level of detail and analytical depth. Thus,

the entry for "Islam," which reads "popular religion founded by Muhammad," is a full five words long. For many entries space is saved through the in-

tal Health. "We turned up three of those poor souls in Chicago alone," says Ron Merrill, "and we're sure there are two dozen more scattered around the country. We're going to nail every last one of them before we're through."

The concept of MHA Folios springs from the ever restless mind of Ellen Bernstein. "Our page numbers share in the Britannica mystique," she asserts. "So why should they just sit there at the bottoms of pages?" Why, indeed? Working with Nathan Taylor, Ellen has massaged her idea into a unique product with wide appeal.



genious application of cross references. A reader who decides to look up extremely fundamental entries—say, "dog," "New York," or "ice cream"—is directed to the article "ignorance, inexcusable."

The specialized market niche for Cliff's Notes Britannica was identified in an exhaustive computer search through the millions of psychological profiles contained in the Neurotics Databank of the National Institute of Men-

"Think of the possibilities," says Nathan with a gleam in his eye. "We can easily sell the 7s and 11s to gamblers—maybe even through booths in hotel lobbies in Nevada and Monte Carlo. Mathematicians will fall over each other for the primes. Top pro athletes won't be able to resist the 1s. Biblical scholars can always use more 12s. Retailers will want the 199s and 349s for their ads." Ellen, of course, sees a raft of buyers among the medical professionals—like anesthesiologists who need 100

Editorial Whee

down to about 93, and optometrists, who need 1s through 5s during eye exams to match the number of fingers they hold up.

One problem, admits Nathan, is that since MHA Folios are derived from a 512-page book, they won't appeal to the Satanic cult market. "We'll have to borrow the 666s from BBOY," he says.

The idea for a Greeked Britannica Yearbook (GBY) was discovered in a file cabinet during a cleanout of the office of departed EB employee Mike Reed. Mike, you may recall, is the man who believed in streamlining encyclopedia and yearbook production by eliminating copy editing and avoiding unnecessary "hidden quality" in the final product. "Greeked" copy, as some of us publishing people know, is unreadable dummy copy, typically made of random letters and spaces that are blocked up into paragraphs and columns. "Using greeked copy for BBOY and other year-

books," says Liz O'Connor, "represents an incredible savings in money and effort for Britannica. At one stroke we're cutting out author commissioning, editing, proofreading, and data checking."

Barbara Whitney, once skeptical of the project, is now an enthusiastic supporter. "Typos are unnoticeable," says Barb, "and actually add some creative variation. Styling amounts pretty much to throwing in caps and punctuation at appropriate places. Once we have a few million random lines of gibberish in the computer-generated, say, by letting turtles walk across the keyboard—the hard part's over."

Karen Barch waxes ecstatically about GBY's international implications. "GBY transcends language and cultural barriers. You no longer have to produce separately translated and reedited editions for each country. All you need is the right alphabet." Karen sees a bright international

future for GBY, with the possible exception of Greece, where a small marketing trial has not been going well. "I don't understand it," Karen says. "For some odd reason they simply hate the title. It's Greek to me."

Bringing up the rear—so to speak—is Britannica Fact-a-Wipe toilet tissue, aimed at the insatiable bathroom reader. A spinoff of the popular Fact-a-Day calendar, Fact-a-Wipe carries fascinating tidbits from the Britannica printed in nonstreak ink on every sheet of tissue. While the subject matter of the entries remains eclectic, there is a slight topical bias toward matters related to the practical function of the product. Hence, the consumer will tend to come across facts about such intriguing topics as hemorrhoids (did you know that they're varicose veins?), fecal matter (wow, it's mostly bacterial!), and coprolites (fossil turds of great scientific value).

Bob McHenry believes that Fact-a-Wipe will find its initial market among those people who are always forgetting to take their *Rolling Stone* or *Fortune* in with them. "But a year or two after we roll it out," he says, "we want to push it as a generalized educational tool." According to Bob, EB is negotiating with the makers of Ex Lax for a co-advertising campaign, and it has tapped the sophisticated literary talents of Chuck Cegielski for a rallying slogan. What has Chuck come up with? "The more you go, the more you'll know."

Nathan said WHAT? Sylvia was WHERE?
Julian and WHO?
Charlie, Art, and HOW MANY?
Carmen? Anita? Mel?
Read all about it in Adds & Deletes NC-17
by Bimbo (page 3)
The ED WE was never like this!